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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: KIRCHNER PRESIDES OVER SIGNING OF CSR
AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOA AND PRIVATE SECTOR

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1459

11. On September 4, Ambassador Wayne attended the signing ceremony of the "Formal Employment and Corporate Social Responsibility Commitment Agreement" between the Ministry of Labor and approximately 100 leading firms in Argentina. The ceremony took place at the Casa Rosada and featured President Nestor Kirchner and Labor Minister Carlos Tomada. (The U.S., Spain, and France were the only Embassies included in the ceremony.)

12. The agreement was sponsored by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and obliges participating companies to ensure dignified labor conditions for their workers. The scope of the agreement encompasses the creation of a forum of private sector experts to counter informal work and child labor, and to promote productivity and competitiveness, job creation, youth employment, improvement of health care, education and on-the-job training, labor law, and social inclusion.

13. U.S. corporate presence at the event was strong, with local executives from approximately 25 U.S. companies in attendance. At the signing ceremony, Ford was the first company invited to sign the agreement. According to the Amcham, the agreement will later be circulated among the remaining participants, of which the following U.S. companies are expected to sign: Alto Parana, AmCham, Cargill, Celulosa Argentina, Citibank, Dow Chemical, Dupont, Ford, General Electric, General Motors, IBM, Lockwood Greene, Manpower, Massalin Particulares, Merck, Sharp, & Dohme, McDonalds, Microsoft, Monsanto, Nextel, Nobleza Picardo, Pan American Energy, Pensaflor, Pepsico, Pfizer, Sun Microsystems, and Visa.

14. Tomada thanked the Ambassador for the positive role that U.S. companies play in Argentina and for the Embassy's role in encouraging attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and specifically for the July 24 roundtable the Embassy hosted on the subject (reftel). Earlier, Tomada informed the Ambassador that all of the companies that participated in the roundtable had signed on to the initiative.
WAYNE